

News Release

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RPU worker saves Chihuahua from canal

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – As part of his daily routine, Fred Ehemann, senior water system operator with Riverside Public Utilities (RPU), cleans the Riverside Canal grating near Riverside Community College. The grating keeps large debris from moving downstream to booster stations.

What he found yesterday in the grating rack shocked him.

Two Chihuahuas, mouths taped shut with electrical tape, were caught on both the right and left sides of the metal grating, and half submerged in water.

“I started to pull some weeds, and I saw the dead one on the right first,” he said. “Then I saw the other poor little dog on the left who was still alive, so I grabbed her and lifted her out of there.”

He quickly removed the tape from the dog’s mouth. “She gasped for air and then fell asleep in my arms,” he said.

He quickly called County Animal Services for assistance. While waiting, he pulled the dead dog from the grating and gave water to the survivor.

“She was thirsty and she liked that,” Ehemann said. “She kept looking up at me and sighing. I put some rags down on the front seat of my truck and she fell asleep again until Animal Services came.”

John Welsh, the public information officer with Animal Services, said today that Ehemann was the true hero of this sad tale of animal abuse.

“From our prospective, this dog wouldn’t be alive today if it wasn’t for this man,” he said. “We would not have found it in time; we’re not checking the canals every day. He’s a hero in our eyes and a good soul.”

Animal Services has already christened the dog “Nemo,” and she will be up for adoption at city hall from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Dec. 1, Welsh said. The event is called “Home for the

Holidays Animal Adoption.” Since yesterday, hundreds of calls from as far away as Iowa are pouring into the shelter to ask to take care of the gentle Chihuahua. To sift through the volume of those interested in taking Nemo home, Animal Services is organizing an essay contest.

Ehemann said it’s hard to fathom this sort of cruelty.

“If you’re moving or can’t afford a pet, you take it to a shelter,” he said. “Who would sink to do this? I can’t get it out of my mind. If I had been there earlier, I keep thinking, I might have been able to save the other one. I wish I had been.”

For more news on Nemo, go to www.rcdas.org

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Established in 1895, Riverside Public Utilities is a consumer-owned water and electric utility governed by a board of nine community volunteers that provides high quality, reliable services to over 107,000 metered electric customers and 63,400 metered water customers throughout the City of Riverside. The Utility is committed to increased use of renewable energy resources and sustainable living practices that help reduce environmental impacts within the City of Riverside and the state of California.

www.RiversidePublicUtilities.com

www.GreenRiverside.com

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